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ABSTRACT

Work-based projects are learning materials that are designed to match the broad-based preparation for working life that the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) aims to provide in Great Britain. YTS aims to develop a work force that is competent and flexible, with the capacity to adapt its skills to new and changing types of employment. This guide describes work-based projects and suggests methods of implementing them. The guide is organized in four sections. Section 1 introduces the concept of work-based projects and provides a rationale for their use. Section 2 of the manual looks at how work-based projects can be used to deliver the outcomes desired by YTS for trainees. Section 3 begins by examining the use of work-based projects in designing training programs and for enhancing experiences in the workplace. It then looks at how work-based projects can be and have been used to reinforce and exemplify the training processes identified as essential features of foundation training in the design framework (integration, induction, assessment and guidance, and participative learning). Section 4 is a practical guide to producing work-based projects and using them with trainees. Appended to the guide is a six-page list of exemplary work-based projects. (KC)

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Coombe Lodge
WORKING PAPER

Information Bank Number 2083

USING & PRODUCING WORK BASED PROJECTS

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USING AND PRODUCING

WORK BASED PROJECTS

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Further information about the ESF YTS Core Skills Project can be obtained from the Project Secretary, Kerry Hastings, at FESC, Core Skills Project, Sackville House, 40 Piccadilly, London W1V 9PA

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YTS Core Skills Project

Host Institution:	Further Education Staff College
Director:	Margaret Levy
Deputy Director:	Rob Valentine
Senior Researcher:	David Mathews
MSC Liaison:	Marj Cowan

Midlands Post Office, Walsall West Midlands C.C. Careers Service, Wolverhampton. Austin-Rover, Birmingham. Training and Personnel Services Birmingham. Shropshire County Council.	Roy Boffy; Pauline Bailey Faculty of Education Wolverhampton Polytechnic. Castle View Dudley West Midlands	Wolverhampton Polytechnic
Scotland GEC, Kirkcaldy Fife Regional Council	Julie Bowen; David Marshall; Alistair McFadzean; Roy Ratcliffe Alex Jack Core Project Randolph Place Randolph Industrial Estate Kirkcaldy Fife	Fife Regional Council
Wales David Evans Department Store, Swansea. West Glamorgan County Council. H.C.I.T.B. West Glamorgan/Dyfed. Swansea College of Further Education.	Ann Evans; Bryan Prescott	West Glamorgan County Council
Yorkshire & Humberside Post Office, Leeds Tyzack Sons & Turner Sheffield. Argyll Stores Ltd. Management and Industrial Training Services, Grimsby. ICI Huddersfield.	Nanci Downey; Ruby Chambers; Shirley Taylor; Sue Kerrison YHAFHE Bowling Green Terrace Leeds	Yorkshire and Humberside Association of Further and Higher Education

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WORK-BASED PROJECTS

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

Work-based projects are learning materials which are designed to match the broad-based preparation for working life which the Youth Training Scheme aims to provide. YTS aims to develop a workforce which is competent and flexible, with the capacity to adapt its skills to new and changing types of employment. This is necessary for young people of all abilities in all situations; work-based projects make the most of every opportunity for developing their skills, knowledge and attitudes in everyday tasks.

Young workers learn in many different ways. Traditional teaching and training methods are not always the most effective for all types of skill, knowledge and attitude development. We have always known that young peoples' motivation to learn can be increased by involvement in purposeful activity, that tasks at work, for instance, will bring out qualities which are not always obvious in the classroom. And there is nothing particularly new in the use of projects to inject realism and participation into learning. But the use of project activity in work experience is new in most occupational training. What has not always been appreciated is that many of the virtues of project-style work are to be found ready-made in work experience. There is a realistic situation, a definite outcome to aim for, and the opportunity to learn by doing. Most important of all, there are a variety of situations which are rich in their potential for developing skills of all kinds - occupational, personal and social.

The fundamental concern of the Youth Training Scheme is with what young workers can do with their skills and knowledge, not merely with what knowledge they have. In the past employers have often complained that young people are unable to live up to their qualifications; that they have 'O' level English, for example, but are unable to communicate with supervisors; that they have 'O' level Maths but cannot perform simple number tasks, like checking delivery notes reliably. Work-based projects respond to such problems by encouraging trainees to develop and practise skills and knowledge in realistic conditions. Much training and teaching is concerned with separating the skills and knowledge which go into competent performance. Work-based projects are concerned with bringing the parts together again, with providing a point at which the various inputs in the scheme are integrated in the trainee's performance.

As such, they can provide a common focus for the various contributors to a trainee's programme. Supervisors, trainers and off-job tutors alike can see what the trainee has to do, how well it is done and what further help is needed.

The work-based projects referred to in the text have all been successfully tested with YTS managing agents in MSC's Core Skills Project and elsewhere (1). Other managing agents might be able to use them as they stand; more likely, they will want to modify and adapt them to suit their own circumstances. There is no professional qualification in producing work-based projects. The only qualification is to want to help trainees to exploit the full value of work experience. Anyone can have a go. Neither the projects nor the trainees' responses need to be written. There need not even be distinct 'project' sessions within the learning programme. The essence of the project activity is to exploit the opportunities that are available in work experience (2) for learning. This can be done by anyone who takes the time to ask whether a task can be done differently, whether information can be found by the trainee instead of given by the supervisor, whether a plan can be devised instead of a routine followed, a decision taken by the trainee rather than made for him/her, and so on.

SECTION II of the Manual looks at how work-based projects can be used to deliver the 4 YTS outcomes for trainees.

SECTION III begins by examining the use of work-based projects in designing training programmes and for enhancing experience in the workplace. It then looks at how work-based projects can be and have been used to reinforce and exemplify the training processes identified as essential features of foundation training in the design framework. These are:

- integration
- induction
- assessment and guidance
- participative learning

SECTION IV is a practical guide to producing work-based projects and using them with trainees.

(1) These work-based projects were initially published by MSC and issued free to YTS managing agents. Further copies can be purchased from the Further Education Staff College [for details see ....]. These projects were written to exemplify the principles which are explained in this manual. A full list of the published projects is contained in Appendix I. The number in brackets after project titles contained in the text are the projects' catalogue reference numbers.

The structure of the published BPs follows a common format.

Introduction	Which is common to all projects and outlines the main purposes and principles on which the projects are based.
Project Information	Briefly outlines the origin and testing of the particular project.

Summary	A short statement of the content of the project, to assist in initial matching of projects to placements.
Supervisor's Notes	General and specific notes on the practical operation of particular projects.
Off-the-Job Tutor's Notes [optional]	Like supervisor's notes, where there is a built-in off-job component in the project.
Trainee's Guide	The 'meat' of the project. It is written for trainees and contains a number of sections:-
Names and Times	To record basic data and to encourage trainees to be systematic.
Background	Says why the project was written.
Situation	Says where the project was written for.
Purposes	Shows the relationship between project tasks and core skills.
Action Plan	Tells the trainee what has to be done.
Trainee Review	Asks the trainee to reflect on what has been learned whilst carrying out the project.
Supervisor Review	Provides the opportunity for supervisor to comment on the trainee's performance.
Assessment	Suggests ways of assessing work-based learning through focussing on the core skills used in tasks.

(2) The term 'work experience' is used generally in the text to include task-based activities of all sorts. This includes such activities in 'Mode B' workshops, and in community programmes and in the off-job elements of all schemes.

SECTION II WORK-BASED PROJECTS AND THE LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE YTS

Work-based projects help trainees to achieve in all four of the outcomes which are required in YTS.

These are :

1. Competence in job and/or a range of occupational skills
2. Competence in a range of transferable core skills
3. Ability to transfer
4. Personal effectiveness

Designing a YTS scheme to include work-based projects can help to deliver the four learning opportunities in an integrated way. This approach is made clear in the following example which takes as its starting point the tasks the trainee is doing and works outwards to make connexions with a wide range of learning opportunities that exist in a particular situation. In short, the project capitalised on the motivation and interest which was provided by the trainee's work role.

The example is drawn from the work-based project 'ET Phone Home' (M/5) which was written for a trainee on placement with a department within a large local authority. The department had a team of technical staff whose work involved making visits to the many sites for which the department was responsible. Although the technical staff tried to ensure that the office staff knew their weekly itinerary, this was frequently subjected to last minute changes. This caused problems, frayed tempers and occasional panics when administrative staff could not contact the technical staff to pass on urgent messages.

The office manager was well aware of this problem and thought that a solution might well lie in one of the many types of radio paging systems available. He, however, was pressed for time to gather the necessary information together to present a case for the introduction of such equipment, and in any case thought that it presented a valuable learning opportunity for the trainee.

The trainee was given this problem set in the form of a work-based project.

In summary form, the tasks in the project's Action Plan were as follows. Note that the project addresses the trainee directly :-

TASK 1

Discuss the problem with your supervisor. Make yourself familiar with the procedures that currently operate. Talk to staff and find out if they have any ideas or suggestions for improving procedures. Take notes during meetings/discussions.

TASK 2

Plot on map all sites visited by staff. Work out the furthest distances involved.

TASK 3

Find out names and addresses of suppliers. Write a letter to each to get a quotation.

TASK 4

Choose 3 quotations. Compare advantages and disadvantages of each. Decide which would be the best system. Record findings.

TASK 5

Design a questionnaire to find out the problems of field staff.

TASK 6

Send questionnaire out to field staff with a memo explaining its purpose and what you want them to do.

TASK 7

Design form to be used by office staff and managers to log time spent passsing on messages to field staff. Enlist support of staff to complete this.

TASK 8

Analyse information from forms and questionnaire.

TASK 9

Organise information and findings into report for supervisor.

At first sight the project might seem too difficult for a YTS trainee. In fact the trainee, with support and guidance from his supervisor, was able to tackle all the tasks with considerable success. It is common for trainers and tutors to under- estimate what young people can achieve through this type of guided experience. It is worth remembering that the trainee was neither faced with doing the project entirely alone nor was he part of a large group of trainees with one trainer. He was tackling an important problem surrounded by experienced workers who were willing and able to give advice and guidance as necessary. Many work places can offer similar support.

The trainee provided valuable evidence on the time spent by office staff in tracking down members of the technical team in order to pass on messages. He also provided information on the latest technological advances in paging systems. All this he presented in the form of a report to his supervisor. This report formed the basis of a formal report to committee written by the supervisor. Clearly the trainee could not write such a report, but his work was used and he was able to see how cases for expenditure are made and what route they must take through the organisation.

The project, then :

allowed the trainee to demonstrate competence in some of the skills associated with being a clerk: writing reports, letters and memos; comparing quotations; analysing information — YTS OUTCOME 1

widened the range of transferable core skills in the placement: — YTS OUTCOME 2

Number
- comparing the relative costs and benefits of various radio paging systems.
- interpreting numerical data from the forms and questionnaires.

Communication
- finding out information by speaking to colleagues about procedures.
- asking other people in the workplace for assistance.

Problem solving
- planning the design of a questionnaire and a form
- planning the presentation of information in a report.

made the trainee aware of the skills which he was developing, by focussing attention on them during the reviewing session. He was then able to apply similar problem-solving strategies and techniques in off the job training when he was asked to conduct a survey into the leisure pursuits of young people. He was also able to see the need for the formal structuring of reports which he had been taught in off-the-job training. The project offered him the opportunity to link theory and practice and to transfer skills learnt in one situation to the other.

YTS OUTCOME 3

gave the trainee the opportunity to demonstrate his personal effectiveness by :

- tackling a difficult job on his own
- persuading others to take part and help
- using his initiative to find out the suppliers of paging equipment

YTS OUTCOME 4

Programme designers often find it difficult to plan for the whole range of outcomes within work experience, just as supervisors often find it difficult to see what they have to do with work experience. Work-based projects show how they can be offered in the everyday working environment and why they are important in that environment.

The introduction has described the project's learning strategy as that of capitalising on the motivation and interest which is provided by the trainee's work role. Projects nearly always start, then, from some particular aspect of occupational competence - ordering goods, processing mail or diagnosing a machine fault, for instance - and work outwards to make connections with a wider range of learning opportunities.

Work-based projects can require skills to be used to demonstrate occupational competence. They are not, however, intended to be substitutes for occupational training, nor to cover comprehensively the training which is required for particular jobs. But, having borrowed the momentum of workplace activity, they will pay a dividend in terms of trainee performance. For competence in the workplace is clearly more than the ability to carry out every-day tasks to certain standards. It is knowing what to do when the tasks do not go as expected, or when new tasks are created. It is using initiative, getting on with fellow workers and understanding how your actions affect others. These are qualities which are valued in all workers, and never more than in a period of rapidly-changing work-roles such as the present. They are also the qualities which will serve young people well in their life outside employment. Work based

projects provide opportunities for trainees to develop these qualities.

The core-skills are those which are commonly required in a wide range of tasks in all occupations and which are essential if trainees are to be competent in those tasks. They are the transferable parts of differing occupational tasks and activities. Work-based projects help trainees with this outcome in the following ways:

1 by focussing trainees' attention on the core skills which are necessary to achieve the purposes of the project;

2 by concentrating trainees' attention on the exercise of these skills in the Action-Plan section of the project;

3 by including activities which require skills that might be absent in some work experience, such as those of planning, or decision-making;

4 by encouraging supervisors to make trainees aware of the skills that are 'embedded' in their everyday work activities;

5 by recording the core skills which trainees have used in completing the project.

It is one thing to have skills which can be used in a variety of situations, but quite a different thing actually to use them. This is why the ability-to-transfer-skills is required as a separate outcome in YTS. For example the trainee who uses the skill of finding out information from written sources in one workplace will need to fulfil three conditions to be able to put it to good use in another workplace:

1 to know which elements of his/her skill are useful in the new office or workplace;

2 to find out whatever else needs to be known or done to complement the previously acquired skill;

3 to have the confidence to put 1 and 2 together to act effectively.

Because they can deliberately require trainees to move from one task to another, with similar skills content, work-based projects are ideal vehicles for this sort of learning. They can, that is, help trainees to 'look in' on their own development and adaptation of skills. As one trainee put it:-

"Because the supervisor in my first placement had encouraged me to ask questions and find things out for myself, I was much less nervous of doing this when I moved to my second placement and I settled in very quickly. I made a point of getting to know the other workers and of how my job fitted in with theirs."

It is not possible to predict skill transfer with certainty, and work-based projects do not claim to give trainees powers of 'magic' transfer, enabling them to use a once-acquired skill in any of the myriads of new situations in which it might be useful. What we do know, however, is that young workers commonly underestimate the extent of their own skills, especially when they do not have 'craft' or equivalent respectability. "I just do it" is the common response to enquiries about what skills they have acquired. This is regrettable since we also know that trainees' awareness of their skills has a critical effect upon their chances of transferring them to new situations. In general, trainees who know what skills they have will learn more quickly and more effectively in new situations which involve those skills. Awareness of skill, then, is an essential factor in the development of an adaptable workforce.

Personal effectiveness is to do with the way in which trainees react to situations in order to make the best of them - by showing initiative when the right course of action is not obvious, by finding things out instead of waiting to be told and by developing and maintaining the right sorts of relationships with other people in the workplace. By their very definition they are skills which require trainees to be given some freedom to act and to make choices independently. And - by definition - this is what work-based projects do.

For example in 'E.T Phone Home', the trainee was given a large measure of responsibility for tackling a difficult problem. Support was available, but the problem remained his. He had to use his initative in planning how to get information, and personal skills in eliciting the participation of other workers. The task belonged to the trainee, not to the trainer or to the company. The feeling of ownership was critical in heightening his motivation and interest.

Conclusions

In commenting on the value of work-based projects trainees stress two points:

- that they help them to find things out;
- that they make them feel more confident in the workplace.

It is in these ways that outcomes 2,3, and 4 feed back into occupational competence, for it is very often the trainees who can and will adapt, and who can act with some autonomy and judgement, who are most valued in the workplace, especially when the pace of change is such that formal training must be complemented by the trainees' own ability to adapt quickly to new machinery, processes and systems.

Finally, it must be remembered the Youth Training Scheme is an all-ability programme, concerned with what young people can do, at whatever 'level'. Work-based projects are deliberately designed to allow all trainees to achieve to the maximum of their abilities. The same project may be completed satisfactorily by trainees of markedly different types of ability. For example, through the work-based project 'What's the Flexitime?' (M/9) one trainee went into considerable detail in examining the ways in which salaries are negotiated. She particularly looked at the way in which the local authority rewarded employees for responsibility. She, then, got carried along by the project with the encouragement and support of her supervisor and off-job tutor. Another trainee, tackling the same project in the same local authority, simply produced the minimum requested by the project in demonstrating her understanding of the operation of the 'flexitime' system. Even this she found quite difficult to complete and needed considerable support to do so. This 'self-levelling' aspect is common in most work-based projects: it enables trainees to work up to the limits of their ability, and encourages them to extend themselves beyond this.

The following section explains how projects can be designed to do this consistently by concentrating on the processes in scheme design which lead to the outcomes.

It looks at the use of work-based projects in

- overall scheme design, and enhancement of work experience;
- integration;
- induction;
- assessment and guidance;

and at how they exemplify participative learning.

SECTION III WORK-BASED PROJECTS and the YTS TRAINING PROCESSES

III.1 USING WORK-BASED PROJECTS IN THE DESIGN OF TRAINING PROGRAMMES

"Most Supervisors are willing to help trainee as much as they can - they see the need for a broad-based training which gives the trainees as many skills as possible. What they often don't know is how to do this. Work based projects have given them a way in; they help train staff as well as trainees". [Managing Agent]

In common with other training aids, work based projects are most effective when their use is deliberately planned as part of the training programme. Experience in the Core Skills Project and elsewhere has shown that they almost never work well when dropped without introduction onto unsuspecting trainees. They need to be 'sold' to trainees, with the benefits and reasons for doing particular projects clearly stated.

"The work based projects helped me to see that there was a lot more potential for learning in my office than I thought at first." [Supervisor]

So that they are seen as a normal part of the training programme, managing agents in consultation with Supervisors and tutors, will need to plan when and where in the training programme work based projects are to be used, and for what purpose. The plan need not be rigidly adhered to: rather it should be kept flexible, as projects may need to be modified to cater for individual learning needs, or new projects might need to be produced to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. There is no ideal number of work-based projects to include in a training programme; so much depends on individual circumstances, on opportunities available, on the needs of trainees, on the length of particular projects, and so on - though experience suggests that 6 to 8 projects is a good number to aim for to make a significant impression.

"Projects put the 'planned' into 'planned work experience'," is how one supervisor put it.

There is no particular 'best person' to introduce projects to trainees - supervisors, tutors, and scheme co-ordinators have all undertaken the function with success. If they are introduced through tutors or co-ordinators, though, care needs to be taken to ensure that supervisors know that this is to be done and to enlist their support. Where supervisors are reluctant to allow time to work on projects or are otherwise unsupportive [usually because of inadequate consultation or briefing] the projects are rarely successful. Usually, trainees need a fair amount of support and encouragement with the first one or two projects, especially to make sure that they extract the maximum learning

potential from them - there is a tendency to dash them off quickly at first without really examining all of the opportunities that they raise. Thereafter, support from tutors and supervisors can usually ease off - trainees often take a real pride in ownership of their projects, enjoy the opportunity they offer to find things out for themselves, and construct their own support networks of, for example, other trainees and workers. This fulfils one of the overriding purposes of the projects, which is to encourage trainees to greater independence, and to take responsibility for their own learning.

"They give the trainees a lot of confidence to go out and talk to other workers."
[Managing Agent]

In general, where there are multiple placements, projects are best introduced early on during a trainee's time in a particular placement, so as to give ample time for completion. This is especially true where placements are of a relatively short duration.

Work based projects may be used for a variety of purposes in training, from making a placement more varied and interesting, [for example, 'Dead Letters' (M/85)] to acting as a vehicle to assess a trainee's performance across the range of expected YTS outcomes (for example 'How Do I Get There?': (W/1)). The main design uses of work based projects are considered in more detail in the following sections. They may be summarised as follows :

- for induction;
- to enhance work experience;
- to integrate on- and off-job training;
- for assessment and guidance;
- to encourage a participative learning style

These uses do, inevitably, overlap to some extent - they are distinguished here merely as a classification to aid reading.

"They've given me a real insight into what goes on at work and helped me to make my sessions with trainees much more relevant to their needs."
[Off-job Tutor]

The sample training plan which follows shows how one managing agent used work based projects as part of the structure of the training plan. The placements were all in a single organisation for an administrative/clerical trainee. Work based projects have been shown to be equally applicable to smaller concerns, and to managing agents where trainees move between as well as within organisations.

WORK AREA/PLACEMENT	MAIN DUTIES	WORK-BASED PROJECTS	MAIN PURPOSE OF USING WBPS	NOTES
Post Room	Dealing with incoming and outgoing mail. Distributing mail.	'What's the Flexitime?' [M/9] 'Postal Services [produced by MA]	Induction Job enhancement	1 2
Reception	Receiving and directing visitors to section [both internal and external]. Maintaining visitor's book. Keeping reception area well presented. Typing. Answering telephone enquiries.	'Taking Telephone Calls' [S/10] 'Visitor's book' [Y/12] 'What people want' [produced by MA] 'Fire' [W/51] 'Arranging and Conducting a Visit' [Y/89]	Induction Job enhancement Job enhancement Induction Job enhancement	1 2 2 1 2
General Office [Personnel]	Filing correspondence. Typing letters and reports. Photocopying/duplicating collating reports. Distributing reports directly and via internal mail system. Processing job applications.	'Accidents' [S/97] 'Where does it go?' [produced by MA] 'Clear as MUD' [M/16] 'Not Another File [M/7] 'Who gets the job?' [M/8] 'The New Employee' [Y/14] 'Photocopy costs' [produced by MA]	Induction Induction Induction Integration Integration Job enhancement Integration	1 1 1 3 3 2 3

NOTES

1 Induction is required to help the trainee find his/her feet in each new placement. Apart from helping the trainee to see where his/her work fits into the overall pattern of work in the section, the opportinity is taken to introduce trainees to important tasks within the section and to particular hazards and difficulties that might be met. Thus for the reception area, it is particularly important that the trainee knows how to handle the telephonecalls and theprocedureto be followed in the eventofafire, whereasin the general office there is profusion of jargon and initials to be mastered, and general awareness of safety hazards to be fostered.

2 Job enrichment is called for in reception because there are sometimes lengthy periods of time when little happens. The use of projects enables the trainee to be occupied in a useful learning activity related to the work of a receptionist. On the other hand, the work in the general office is quite varied and interesting - nevertheless it was felt useful to include a project which took the trainee beyond normal duties to look at the procedure for dealing with new employees.

3 The off-the-job training concentrated most heavily on the skills needed in the general office - typing, filing, reprographics, general clerial duties - and it was felt essential that a real effort was made to allow the trainee's work experience to be drawn upon to inform the off-the-job training, to relate it to the work of the trainee, and to allow the trainee to see the links between theory and practice.

It is worth nothing that :

- the exemplar work based projects used all needed modifying to fit the exact circumstances of the placements;

- the trainee was allowed to select which projects he wanted to tackle in the last two placements. He suggested the topic for one of the 'home-grown' work-based projects.

"It didn't take long to modify the project to fit my workplace - you can't use them as text books even if you want to."
[Supervisor]

III.2 USING WBPS TO ENHANCE WORK EXPERIENCE

"I was a bit concerned when I first went to this placement on a monitoring visit - the trainee seemed to be doing only very basic jobs like cleaning up. I was, however, impressed by the owner's attitude to the trainee - he was a caring sort of chap who clearly wanted to do his best for the trainee, and who had taken a trainee on because, in his words, 'I wanted to do something to help young people find their feet in the world!'"
[John, Local Programme Assessor]

John discussed the problem of the limited range of tasks that the trainee was doing with the owner of the company, and established some of the reasons for this. "It was basically a one-man outfit, making fitted furniture to order. The company was only in its second year of operation, margins were tight, and customer satisfaction a major priority. The sponsor simply did not feel that he could take the risk of allowing the trainee to work on finished goods, and this placed a natural barrier on the work he could do. The off-job training was doing something to raise the trainee's trade skill levels, but until this was much further advanced, the owner could see little opportunity for increasing the range of jobs done at work - "it was like marking time," he said."

John had some experience of using work based projects with other sponsors in his area and thought they might offer a way forward. He asked the sponsor if he could think of other tasks the trainee could do which were not so critical as working on finished products, but which would nonetheless broaden out the training and so be useful both to him and to the trainee. "It didn't take much time to come up with a list of ideas as long as your arm! As you can imagine, there were many things that needed doing, but which, given the pressures on his time, the owner was not able to do, but which would provide useful learning opportunities for the trainee. It was felt that the trainee could usefully have a crack at some of these things, and it wouldn't hurt the business if he didn't get everything right first time off. The first thing the trainee did was to design and make a shadow board for

the hand tools. He then went on to make a racking system to store useable timber offcuts.

The trainee did these well - he was especially good at planning and preparing the work to be done - and the sponsor then decided to give him some experience on the clerical side of the business by asking him to help the clerical assistant to compile a list of unpaid bills and chase the customers for payment."

It is interesting to note that none of these work based projects were formally written up, nor would they, on their own, have made a weak placement into a very good one. However, given the sponsor's attitude to the trainee, they helped considerably to turn good intentions into practice and to make a rather undemanding work experience much more stimulating.

A major use of work based projects is to increase the range of learning opportunities available to trainees in the workplace, and to encourage supervisors and managing agents to take a more imaginative approach to using work experience so as to improve the quality of that experience.

Supervisors are often wary of giving trainees non-routine jobs to do, for quite understandable reasons: trainees are new to the workplace and their capabilities are often unknown. By providing a clear structure for trainees to work within, work based projects can help to reduce this reluctance. Trainees are referred back to the supervisor for consultation at points when decisions need to be made and implemented, and supervisors and trainees can quickly check where further help and advice is needed before mistakes are made. They provide a structure for enriching experience and so minimise the risks involved. They also, often, lead to unexpected outcomes :-

> "I know more about how the Council operates now I've had the trainee's reports on where his work goes to and how it's used - and I've been here 15 years!"
> [Supervisor]

The ideas for the projects which follow by way of example came from trainees and Supervisors, and from tutors. They all started from the job which the trainees were doing and deliberately sought ways of enriching the jobs by providing a greater range of tasks to do, and by involving the trainee more actively in the training process. They seek to stimulate a greater interest in the job and to increase the trainee's motivation to learn by doing tasks which have an obvious relevance and value.

> "She learnt far more about interview techniques and the need for careful preparation by looking at how the company handled job applications and interviews than I could have taught her in a dozen lessons on the topic."
> [Tutor]

All work based projects seek to enrich work experience. The examples which follow were chosen to show the kinds of activities which trainees proved capable of tackling in a wide variety of settings.

'ET Phone Home' [M/5], which was extensively quoted in Section II, asks the trainee to investigate the costs of a radio-paging system and to make recommendations for introducing such a system to a workplace where many of the employees spend a lot of time out of the office. It can be easily modified to provide a framework for investigation wherever new technology or new equipment is under consideration. There are a number of similar projects in the published exemplar work based projects- for example 'Not Another File' [M/7], in which the trainee investigates solutions to a filing problem in an office; 'Paint' [M/30] where the trainee examines new methods of applying paint to surfaces, and 'If you want to know the time, ask the computer' [M/39] in which the trainee carries out a feasibility study for the introduction of computer filing in a work study department.

> "I took some of my projects along to the interview for the job. The man who interviewed me was really interested - he asked me if he could have a copy to use with his office staff! It gave us a lot to talk about at the interview, and I got the job."
> [Trainee]

'Arranging and conducting a visit' [Y/89] makes the trainee responsible for planning the arrangements for a party of visitors to the workplace and escorting the visitors. It not only gives the trainee this particular task to do, but has the added advantage of ensuring that the trainee knows about the whole range of company operations and processes, and so gives the opportunity to develop a broader awareness of how these fit together to allow the company to operate. By placing this knowledge in the context of conducting a visit, and so giving it a purposeful outcome, it avoids the sterility of the traditional 'Cook's Tour' of the company. This kind of exercise has been successfully used in a variety of organisations where visitors are received.

'Company Newspaper' [S/98] takes a rather different approach to job enhancement. It involves the trainee in preparing an article of his/her own choosing for an in-house magazine, and so introduces trainees to a frequently-used device to improve internal communications and public relations by involving them directly in using it. It provides an opportunity for trainees to develop an insight into different production processes from those to which they are accustomed, and stresses the importance of working to deadlines.

'Protecting Profits and Controlling Shrinkage' [Y/70] exemplifies another common theme in work based projects - the improvement of existing procedures. The trainee identifies the causes of profit loss in a supermarket and is encouraged to come up with new ideas for tackling the problem. The project can be easily adapted to

fit many situations where trainees can be involved in investigating existing practices and suggesting improvements. In one company, trainees investigated heat loss during a part of the manufacturing process and their recommendations led directly to cost savings running into thousands of pounds. In another, a trainee 'shopped around' various suppliers of goods, identified a much cheaper source, and, again, saved the company a substantial sum of money.

> "I don't think I'd ever have got round to sorting that storage problem out. Getting the trainee to do it has taught him a lot, and got it out of my hair. We've both benefited from the exercise; he enjoyed the responsibility, and I got a job done"
> [Supervisor]

'Preventing Customer Damage to Packaged Goods' [M/71] looks at the importance of display, in this case in a warehouse, to allow customers the opportunity to inspect the contents of packages without breaking them open - a habit which infuriated the trainee charged with keeping her section in good order! Similar projects have been used in a variety of settings and for a variety of purposes - to promote sales, to improve security, to enhance a company 'image', to attract customers - wherever marketing is needed. Trainees have often displayed considerable talent and ingenuity in this kind of promotional activity.

> "I was surprised, and pleased, at quite how capable he was - you'd never had guessed it from his exam results. Now I trust him to do much more difficult jobs, and he seems to appreciate this."
> [Supervisor]

'A Fencing Project' [M/18] shows that all work based projects do not need a written outcome. A trainee working on a farm was asked to cost out, order materials for, and construct a fence to isolate a coppice from livestock. Similar sorts of practical projects can, of course, be employed in many different contexts to allow trainees to use and demonstrate competence in a range of skills with a useful outcome.

'Recording Milk Yield on a Micro-computer System' [S/22] shows how work based projects can be used to introduce trainees to the use of new technology and its practical application to their own workplaces. Although designed for use on a dairy farm, the principles that underlie it can be readily adopted elsewhere - in offices to look at computer filing systems, in stores to investigate computerised stock control, and so on.

> "I've got a lot more confidence in my ability to get on with people, and I'm not so worried about looking silly if I have to ask questions when I don't understand things. The projects have helped a lot with this."
> [Trainee]

III.3 USING WORK-BASED PROJECTS TO INTEGRATE ON- AND OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING

"Vicky was always complaining that her off-the-job training was boring and irrelevant. She couldn't see how it was helping her in her job, or how the two related at all." [Mode A Managing Agent's co-ordinator].

Vicky worked in the accounts office of the sales department of a manufacturing company, and the work-based project 'Sales Account File' [Y/3] seemed to fit her situation closely, with a few modifications. This project asks the trainee to prepare a leaflet to explain the system to a new trainee, to present statistical information in a variety of ways, and to devise a wall chart to illustrate simply the various procedures in the accounts office. "We discussed the project with Vicky and her Supervisor and both agreed that it would be useful for Vicky to do it. It would help to develop her number and communication skills and the Supervisor felt that it would be useful to him to have information gathered and presented in the ways suggested in the project. The biggest problem in actually doing the project was that while Vicky could gather all the information she needed at work, there was no way she could do the presentation. There simply weren't the facilities available, nor the expertise to advise her on design problems, layout, and so on." [Co-ordinator]

Vicky's off-the-job training was provided in a local Further Education College, where she was studying for a B/Tec [General] Certificate. Part of the time devoted to the "People and Communication" module was set aside for the trainees on the course to work on an individual topic chosen from a list supplied by the tutor. The managing agent's co-ordinator approached the College tutor concerned and, after discussion, persuaded her to allow Vicky to use this time to work on those parts of 'Sales Account File' which could not be completed at work. It proved possible for Vicky to use the College art room to complete the artwork on her poster, and the art tutor gave her some help with this. Although the Communication tutor was not a statistician, she knew enough about the presentation of statistical information to be able to help Vicky with this aspect of her work.

"As a result of this, Vicky's attitude towards the off-the-job training became much more positive, and her motivation to attend increased considerably. The tutors found that it gave them much more insight into what Vicky was doing at work, and into ways of helping to relate the off-the-job provision to this without simply providing either more of the same, or a series of exercises which, to Vicky at least, appeared abstract and remote from her needs, experience and interests. We are now looking at ways of developing this integrated approach further."

Many work based projects seek to integrate planned work experience with off-the-job training, and they do this in a variety of ways. In general, work experience is the most appropriate place for gathering work-related data and for implementing the results of project work, whilst off-the-job situations are often best for preparation and for reflection on the learning outcomes of a particular project. This is not a hard and fast distinction though. What is important is that activities related to doing the project should take place in the most appropriate location for their successful completion. This will vary enormously depending on support available, material resources, sources of information, and other circumstances.

In using work based projects to link work experience to off-the-job training, tutors will need to adopt flexible modes of working in order to take maximum advantage of the individual curriculum provided by the projects. In particular, tutors will often need to find ways of allowing trainees, whether working individually or in small groups, to pursue their own interests. In this sense work based projects are not very different from much project work undertaken in Further Education Colleges and elsewhere: where they differ is in their focus on the trainee's work experience as a fruitful source of direct learning from experience. Often, for example, a group of trainees can work on a similar theme, gathering evidence of particular practices, say on safety, from their own workplaces, and using this to inform group discussions of different practices and the reasons for these. Such focussing on work experience can often help trainees to see the relevance of off-the-job training to their own needs as young workers and adults.

Where work based projects are introduced by off-the-job tutors, care needs to be taken to ensure that workplace Supervisors are informed of the purpose of the exercise so as to gain their support and co-operation. This liaison can often be eased considerably where tutors adopt an outreach mode of working and actually spend some time with trainees in their workplaces. Apart from giving tutors valuable insights into exactly what trainees are doing at work, this mode of operation can be extremely useful in providing support to trainees and in allowing trainees to see tutors in a different light. For instance, tutors come to be seen as being particularly helpful, rather than as people who trainees meet only once a week in a training school or classroom.

Apart from providing direct links between the different parts of experience, work based projects also exemplify the integrated curriculum, with skills and knowledge being learned and practised as part of a complete activity, rather than being parcelled up into discrete subjects, which trainees often find difficulty in relating to.

"Vicky started to see number and communication skills as being positively useful. She could see the point of them when they were applied in real situations, and not treated as 'Maths' and 'English'."
[Scheme Coordinator]

In the off-the-job situation the use of themes and activities which go across subject boundaries and require skills to be used in an integrated way can motivate trainees who are not so readily motivated by traditional teaching techniques.

Some of the published work based projects contain 'Notes for off-the-job tutors' as a separate section, whilst others do not, relying more on directions in the 'Action Plan' to stimulate ideas for relating work experience and off-the-job training.

There are three main ways in which work based projects seek to integrate work experience with off-the-job training :

Firstly, many work based projects require trainees to undertake activities which may not be readily completed at work - to plan and execute visits; to write letters; to design forms and questionnaires; to make posters and leaflets; to investigate and use a variety of sources of information; to present the results of a survey to a group of trainees; to prepare displays, and so on. Here the off-the-job tutor can provide valuable support and guidance to trainees working on projects whose principal focus is the workplace. Examples of this kind of project are:-

"What's the Flexitime?" [M/9] in which the trainee is asked to write a section on flexitime for the organisation's induction manual, and to investigate other systems of time keeping and wage payments.

"Electronics components: Resistors" [S/35] in which the trainee may well need help with understanding the application of electronics theory to be able to perform in the workplace.

"Fire" [W/51] in which the trainee has to draw plans illustrating access to fire exists and other safety features both at work and at home.

Secondly, some projects require some activities to be carried out off-the-job - to carry out visits; to present the results of investigations to groups of trainees; to carry out surveys and interviews; to use libraries and other information sources, and so on. In these projects, the off-the-job tutor will always need to supervise and co-operate in executing the projects. Some examples are :-

"How do I get there?" [W/1] in which the trainee carries out a survey of the needs of users of a mobile library service. In "Marketing 1 : it's a shopper's world" [W/64] a similar survey technique is used to investigate the marketing strategies of different stores.

"What a Joint" [W/56] in which the trainee has to carry out a series of visits to investigate the various stages of meat marketing from the fatstock market to the butcher's shop. This approach is often useful to allow trainees to build up a picture of the whole industry in which they are engaged.

"Who gets the job" [M/8] in which the trainee is asked to present the results of an investigation into appointments procedures to a group of trainees. The technique of reporting to other trainees is useful to provide a satisfying focus for and conclusion to project work.

Thirdly, a number of work based projects offer suggestions to off-the-job tutors for possible extensions to the project, and also suggest ways of dealing with topics which mirror the active style of training advocated by work based projects. Here the off-the-job sessions are a natural extension of the project work both in content and style, but are not essential to its successful completion. Some examples are as follows :-

"Garage Storekeeping" [Y/25] asks the trainee to investigate various aspects of work in a garage storeroom, and goes on to suggest, among other things, a study of safety practices in other work situations; an investigation of other information retrieval systems; looking at the role of credit in industry, and using role-plays to simulate different kinds of customer the trainee may meet at work.

"Protecting profits and the control of shrinkage" [Y/70] asks the trainee to investigate the causes of wastage in a supermarket. It goes on to suggest investigations of wastage in other situations, a study of coding systems and control mechanisms, and the use of task analysis to identify the skills which trainees are likely to be able to transfer to new situations.

III.4 USING WBPS FOR INDUCTION TO THE WORKPLACE

"This is a large organisation with many different functions. A major problem we found with trainees in the first year of YTS was that they often found it almost impossible to find their way around the place. Another problem was that, understandably, trainees didn't understand our particular jargon - people's job titles, the names of pieces of equipment, the abbreviations we used for different forms, and so on. At first we just left this to chance and hoped that trainees would find their way around and come to understand our industrial language in their own good time. This proved to be frustrating, annoying, and generally very inefficient. I heard of work-based projects at a session run by our local Accredited Centre and thought they might help. What we do now is to ask our trainees to carry out two very simple projects almost as soon as they start work. One of them asks them to draw a plan of their own and adjoining offices, with the names of the people in them, a note of what they do, and their telephone extension numbers, and to keep this in their log book. We then ask the trainees to add to this plan every time they are asked to go to an unfamiliar part of the building and when they meet new workers. The other project asks the trainees to make a note every time they hear a new word or title they don't know or don't understand, and to find out what it means. By structuring induction in this way, rather than leaving things to chance, we found that trainees settled in much more quickly, were more willing to ask questions, and became much more useful to the organisation as a result."
[Mode A Managing Agent's Scheme Coordinator]

Work based projects have proved very successful in helping trainees to settle quickly into new workplaces, helping them to find their feet, to find their way around, find out about people and their jobs, and about work systems, structures and relationships.

Because work based projects provide a framework of questions for trainees to ask, they can point to the kind of things any new worker in a new situation will need to find out and so help in moves to new placements. The structured approach of work based projects also gives trainees confidence to go and ask questions without the fear of appearing over-inquisitive. Other workers have also proved more ready to explain things to trainees when they can see that they are involved in a legitimate exercise. A useful side-effect of this deliberate attempt to encourage questioning by trainees is that they are much more likely to ask about things they don't understand, rather than waiting to be told, or waiting for things to go wrong. It is often difficult for young people, who may have been reluctant to show their ignorance at school, to appreciate the need to ask questions when they start work - yet it is an essential work skill that can be stimulated by the use of work based projects.

The active learning encouraged by wbps also provides a welcome contrast with induction methods which concentrate on giving trainees concentrated doses of factual information which they often find indigestible. Gaining information about, for example, health and safety regulations, payment systems, and company rules and organisation is obviously important to trainees. Being allowed to find out as much of this information as possible for themselves is likely to lead to more effective learning than is being presented with it all by a series of 'talking heads' in the first two days at work! Using work based projects reinforces the more formal parts of the induction process, and gives shape to the less formal.

Some work based projects which have been used in the induction process are briefly outlined below.

"Clear as MUD" [M/6] introduces trainees to the puzzling world of initials at work, and has the added advantage of encouraging them to find out about what goes on behind the initials - what the MD does, what CO2 is used for, and when you need a P45 for instance. It can be easily extended to improve trainees' understanding of the specialist language of the workplace - something which young people often find difficult to cope with, and which is the source of many problems.

"Signs of Safety" [S/96] asks the trainee to identify the meaning of various signs and symbols related to safety both at work and outside, and so helps to reinforce initial safety training. It draws attention to hazardous places, materials, and equipment in the workplace where special care is needed. This reinforcement is essential to the development of 'safety awareness'.

"What's the Flexitime?" [M/9] introduces the trainees to the operation of flexible working hours in a local authority, and asks them to assess the advantages and disadvantages of this method of time keeping. It is easily adapted to other situations with different time keeping practices.

"The Tools of the Trade" [M/27] asks the new trainee to compile a series of job cards with lists of the tools required for each job, and to carry out a stock-take. Designed for use in a small building company, it can be easily modified to fit many different work situations. It helps not only to cement knowledge of tools, their uses, and their names, but also to stress the need to prepare and plan for jobs to be done.

"The Manufacturing Process" [M/43] takes the trainee through each stage of the production of a component on an assembly line, and so helps him/her to see where his/her particular job fits into the total process and the need to maintain high standards of quality in production at each stage. "Production Line - Materials" [S/48] is similar in style, but puts the emphasis on the care and storage of the materials used in production.

"Checkout Operations" [Y/69] is designed not only to help the trainee to learn the procedure of operating a checkout till, but looks also at other aspects of the job, such as coping with emergencies, dealing with customers, and working safely. It helps to stress that 'doing a job' usually involves more than simple routine operations.

"Goods In" [S/74] helps the trainee to learn the procedures for checking incoming stock, and to understand the importance of accuracy, by asking the trainee to follow the paperwork associated with an incoming order through the system. It will adapt easily to any situation where a trainee is involved in processing paperwork, and helps the trainee to see where his/her job fits into the whole operation.

A typical comment from one Supervisor about the value of work-based projects in induction was :

> "It has helped him [the trainee] to fit into the workplace much more quickly, and I've got a lot more confidence that he'll not get lost when he has to leave this office to do a job elsewhere! I think we should use them with new adult workers as well as trainees."

While another Supervisor, initially sceptical, said :

> "I thought there'd be a lot more work for me in these work based projects but funnily enough it's made things easier. They've saved me time, because the trainee seemed to be able to get on with the job a lot quicker than I expected."

III.5 USING WBPS FOR ASSESSMENT AND GUIDANCE

"It can do the jobs I'm given, like filing and taking messages, but they don't help me to realise my potential. they don't stretch me enough."

This trainee had come into the scheme with 4 'O' levels and is following a B/Tec National Certificate course as part of his off-the-job training. He felt resentful because he was not given the opportunity to tackle more demanding tasks.

In another office in the same scheme the supervisor complained: "I don't know how to help Michael. He never gets anything right. I can't trust him even to make a notice. I' will be too messy to use and Art was the only subject he passed school."

These examples, whilst at opposite extremes, show that assessment in YTS has to be concerned with much more than traditional ideas of success and failure. YTS is concerned with what all young people can do and as such its emphasis is upon demonstrated ability to use skills and knowledge. The introductory case study, 'E.T. Phone Home' [pp 34-77] shows that work based projects can provide opportunities for assessment of all four YTS outcomes:-

- competence in a job;
- competence in a range of transferable core skills;
- the ability to transfer skills;
- personal effectiveness

Assessment in YTS is concerned with building on strengths and with recognising needs. This requires continuous reviewing of trainees' progress, so that programmes can be adjusted to the differing needs of different individuals. To do this, supervisors, tutors and others involved in assessment need to observe the actual performance of the trainee in the workplace or in the off-the-job training.

Work based projects can contribute to the assessment of competence by focussing attention on particular activities and skills. They make supervisors and tutors check their assumptions about whattrainees knowand what theycando. Opportunity is provided for structured feedback; learning difficulties become apparent quickly and can be attended to as and when needed. This is important because experiencedworkerstend to forget exactly what they themselves needed to know and to do when they started work. Work based projects include guidance as an integral and natural part of the learning process and can take in a whole range of issues which can only be tackled at the time when they emerge. This avoids the artificiality of 'timetabled' reviews which are isolated from the evidence of actual performance. It is also less threatening.

The built-in feedback provided by work based projects is well illustrated in "The Tools of the Trade [M27]. This is a staightforward project for induction purposes, which asks the trainee to identify the tools used in a number of building jobs, to make up a reference card for each job, and to work out the cost of the tools. It goes on to encourage the trainee to organise a visit to a tool merchant.

At each stage of the project the trainee is referred back to the supervisor to check that s/he is on the right lines. For example, an early task is to make a note of repair jobs regularly carried out. The trainee is then told "Find out from your supervisor if you have left any off your list." Next, the trainee is asked to observe jobs being done and to note the tools being used on the chart. This, again, is referred back for checking: "Make sure you record all the tools used. If you don't know the name of something, ask the builder. Show the chart to your supervisor. Make sure you have recorded all the tools and equipment used on the job."

By these means, the trainee learns the correct trade terms in a non-threatening way, and the supervisor can check the accuracy of the trainee's observation and recording.

Later, the trainee is asked to compare the costs of the tools supplied by two builders' merchant. Again, the trainee is referred to the supervisor: "Show your lists to the builder. Discuss any differences in price you have found. Are the tools and equipment used covered by insurance? If not, find out why." In doing this, the trainee may be providing useful information to the builder about sources of supply. In addition, there is a focus for discussion about an area of mutual interest which can help to overcome the difficulty of simply finding something to talk about. Reviewing progress thus concentrates on a particular issue, rather than being kept at the level of vague generalisation along the lines of: "How have you got on this week?" "All right".

Towards the end of the project, the trainee is asked to write a letter to a local supplier asking to visit his premises. However before the letter is sent the trainee is told to have his letter checked by his supervisor. This reinforces the point for the trainee that outside communications in any business usually require approval by seniors, and provides the opportunity for the employer to check that the letter is appropriate both in style and content.

This continuous review of progress, then, enabled the supervisor to check on the trainee's knowledge and skill and provided the opportunity to introduce general organisational procedures. It provided a useful check, particulary on the trainee's number and communication skills, in a way which did not resemble a formal test - the skills were being used naturally as requirements of the task in hand in a real situation. In addition, and importantly, the review was a two-way process, with both

supervisor and trainee providing and receiving information. This style of reviewing minimises the embarrassment often experienced by trainees and supervisors alike. It encourages the trainee to ask questions and discourages the belief that there is always something wrong with not knowing. It legitimates intervention by the supervisor both to put things right and to suggest alternative courses of action, bcause his/her advice is being deliberately sought.

III.6 USING WORK BASED PROJECTS TO ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATIVE LEARNING

"I knew the theory all right - that trainees should be more actively involved in their training; that we should give them responsibility for their own learning; that we shouldn't give them the answers all the time, and so on. But putting it into practice was something else. Most of my supervisors are tradesmen who take a real pride in the quality of the finished product. This is right, of course, but in practice it meant they were denying all sorts of learning opportunities to trainees. My problem was to get them to see that their job was at least as much to help young people to learn as it was to get a perfect finished job - and you don't help people learn by doing everything for them. I decided to have a close look at one of my sections to see if I could make any suggestions for increasing the trainees' participation in what was going on."
[Bob, Mode B Training Workshop Manager]

Bob talked over his concerns and ideas with his Programme Assessor, who thought that work based projects might give them some ideas for ways in. The project "People who live in glass houses" [M/24] seemed to have a lot in common with the section in the Workshop where trainees were involved in making rabbit hutches, bird feeding tables, nesting boxes, and dog kennels. In this section, the trainees were actually only assembling the products by glueing, nailing, and screwing as appropriate. Even then, there was a high degree of intervention from the Supervisor who frequently stopped trainees from working to put faults right himself, and to put the finishing touches. There were often behaviour problems and some absenteeism and the Supervisor found the job stressful. The Senior Supervisor did all the costing, quantities, and ordering, while the Supervisor did the drawings, measuring, marking out, and much of the cutting of the component parts. This contrasted sharply with the approach taken in the project where trainees of very similar ability levels to those in the Workshop were allowed, with guidance and support from their Supervisor, to investigate, design, order supplies, and prepare the materials and the site to enable them to construct a small greenhouse.

Bob, the Senior Supervisor, and the Supervisor began by identifying and listing all of the tasks involved in making the products. They went on to specify which of these tasks could reasonably be done by trainees. Initially, the Supervisor was reluctant to broaden out the range of tasks to be done by the trainees, feeling that it would only increase his workload. However, he eventually agreed to give it a try. He got his trainees together in a group and between them they decided who was going to do each task and how and when the tasks were to be rotated between them. "At first, it was quite hard going to get the trainees accustomed to this new style of working, but it soon settled down. Because the trainees were taking far more responsibility for the whole process of production they began to take more pride in the finished product and their motivation

noticeably increased. They helped each other out a lot - and criticised each other when jobs weren't up to scratch or weren't done to time. The Supervisor found that he had more time to deal with individuals, because he wasn't having to watch everybody all the time. He was also able to gear the tasks and training to individual abilities and needs, rather than treating all the trainees as being the same. Some of the trainees came up with excellent ideas for new designs and for improving our production techniques. The Supervisor's work load didn't decrease - but his work became a lot more constructive and enjoyable. Although we didn't use the work based project directly, the ideas it contained showed us how to translate the theory into practice, and encouraged us to take the risks involved".

Work-based projects encourage trainees to acquire and use skills and knowledge as part of their experience of real situations. There are two reasons for this:

- assessment in YTS emphasises the importance of demonstrating competence; it is not enough to know - trainees have to be able to do;

- workers increasingly have to adapt to new technologies, working styles and processes, and often without lengthy periods of formal training; they have to be able to find out for themselves.

If trainees are to have to show what they can do in real situations, and if they are to be expected to show initiative and flexibility, they have to have learning opportunities to match. It is not enough, say, for a sales trainee to know about products, to have communications lessons, to undergo training in display and then be expected to piece these experiences together in real performance, for reality is nearly always different. It is different to have to use the skills and knowledge all together, rather than in the separate compartments of the classroom and training room, and it is different to do it under the pressures of workplace distractions, of time and of conflicting demands. And, most of all, it is different to have to do it when it really counts under the pressure of time or of customer demands. These are all things which trainees can only master through experience; they cannot just be told about them, or read about them. Much teaching and training is concerned with taking experience apart to teach for its constituent skills, knowledge and attitudes. Work-based projects are more concerned with putting experience back together.

This is not to denigrate traditional methods, or the acquisition of knowledge. But it does call for some rethinking of the relationship between learning and doing. It is common to try to take learning to the point of perfection before 'risking' real experience. Work-based projects stress the value of experience as learning and as an incentive to further learning, to let the trainee see at first hand why the learning is important and what difference it will make. This can be especially important with

the less concrete skills, like those of communication and problem-solving. Trainees often find it difficult to see why these skills are important in working life, and to make the linkage between acquiring them off-job and using them in real situations.

Structuring learning in this way is not the same as throwing trainees in at the deep-end. Work based projects attempt to start from realistic assessments of what young people can do given appropriate guidance and support. They move through bite-sized chunks of experience with continuous reporting back to supervisors. Experience has shown that this process can dramatically increase supervisor confidence in trainees' abilities. Supervisors have the evidence of these abilities brought constantly before their eyes; formative assessment and guidance become a natural part of the learning process and of the relationship of supervisor and learner. This is especially important in view of the all-ability range of YTS. Trainees who have no great record of educational achievement will often surpass expectations when motivated by purposeful activities which give them their heads. Those who have struggled with the formal disciplines of English for instance, will show themselves to be skilled at extracting information from Supervisors or at agreeing a plan of action with other members of a team. Those with apparently modest capacities for accumulating knowledge will often come through surprisingly well in situations which call for the ability to think on their feet, to show some initiative or to take some responsibility. The knowledge content of courses is often a fixed quantity which young people are required to aim at: those who fall short often derive little value from their experience. Work-based projects consist of more open-ended tasks which allow most to achieve something and some to go further.

Most work based projects give examples of participative training styles in practice, and the following selection is only offered by way of showing the range of different activities suggested.

Many work based projects require trainees to carry out investigations, for example, to find out information or to find out about work systems, which constrasts with the common training practice of giving trainees the information they need or simply telling them about the organisation of the workplace. Examples of this type of project include:

"How do I get there?" (W/1) which amongst other things, asks the trainee to carry out a survey of the needs of users of a County library service;

"Clear as MUD (M/6) which requires trainees to find out the meaning of sets of initials and jargon common in any particular workplace, and

"The New Employee" (Y/14) which asks the trainee to trace through the company's recruitment procedure and its criteria for selecting applicants for posts.

Such investigative projects frequently go further than simply finding out information and require trainees to look into a particular problem that has arisen and to make recommendations for, for example , introducing new procedures, improving work practices, introducing new technology, or improving marketing and display techniques. This contrasts with approaches to training which simply require trainees to implement decisions made by others, and serve to improve understanding of the reasons for and the effects of change. Examples of this kind of project are:

"Monitoring Horticultural Crop Returns" (S/23) in which the trainee uses a micro computer to compare crop performance across a period of time, to identify reasons for any differences and to suggest ways of improving performance;

"Paint" (M/30) which asks the trainee to investigate new methods of applying paint and to make recommendations on whether the firm should adopt any of these new methods, and

"Protecting Profits and the control of Shrinkage" (Y/30) which asks the trainee to find out the causes of stock shrinkage in a supermarket and to make recommendations to reduce this source of loss.

Other projects which deliberately set out to encourage a more participative style of working include those which ask trainees to produce things: artefacts, stock lists, newspaper articles, for example-and those whichask trainees to carry out the whole process of production, from planning the task through to finishing off, so developing competence in a complete task. This contrasts with approaches to training which only encourage trainees to develop a narrow range of skills connected with completing a task which someone else has planned and organised. Examples of this kind of project are:

"A Fencing Project" (M/18) in which the trainee makes a fence, having costed out different types of fencing, organised the tools and materials needed, and planned the way in which to carry out the task;

"Tools of the Trade" (M/27) in which the trainee compiles a series of job cards, listing the tools needed for a range of building and maintenance tasks, which act both as an aid to stock checking and a planning tool, and

"Company Newspaper" (S/98), a group project requiring the trainees concerned to research, prepare, and produce an article for a house magazine.

SECTION IV PRODUCING WORK BASED PROJECTS AND USING THEM WITH TRAINEES

IV.1 PRODUCING WORK BASED PROJECTS

This section is deliberately entitled 'Producing work-based projects' rather than 'Writing work based projects' to stress that the projects do not need to be formally written documents. The form should be dictated by the circumstances. For example, a supervisor who has internalized the style of training advocated by the projects will use the approach in everyday work with the trainees, and may only need to give brief instructions, or perhaps a few notes jotted down on a piece of paper. On the other hand, a managing agent who wishes to build up a library of projects to suit the placements used in training might want to produce fully written-up items. It is worth noting that several of the exemplary projects were carried out first, and only written up later to allow other trainers to have access to the ideas contained in them.

Whilst the guidance in this section may appear to relate to written projects, the processes described can just as readily be applied to projects which take other forms - to those described in spoken instructions, in notes, on sound or video tapes, in cartoons and sketches, for example. Indeed, it should be remembered that restricting projects to the written form will disadvantage those trainees who have difficulty in reading. Yet there is no evidence to suggest that trainees who may be illiterate are incapable of learning - indeed there is much evidence to the contrary - provided appropriate strategies are used.

It should be obvious that there is no professional qualification for producing work based projects. Quite simply, anyone can have a go, and the results are to be measured only in terms of their helpfulness to trainees, not in terms of their length, complexity, or cleverness. What follows, then, is a brief guide to producing work based projects.

GUIDLINES	NOTES TO PRODUCERS
Work-based projects are set in the context of the workplace	
Take for the starting point a particular work activity or function.	Try to choose an aspect of work experience which has obvious, agreed relevance for all - trainee, employer, off-job provider etc. Start small and use a bit of imagination! There is nearly always more potential for learning than appears at first sight. Identify the task to be done or expanded to meet the learning needs of the trainee. Trainees, supervisors, and tutors have all provided ideas for projects.
Move 'outwards' to squeeze all possible learning opportunities out of the work situation.	The aim is to get from the obvious occupational skills to the less obvious, like personal effectiveness, without making the tasks seem artificial or silly. Think of ideas to widen opportunities for learning by increasing the range of activities that trainees can be allowed to do. Look for real problems for the trainee to solve, useful data to be collected, existing processes and procedures to be investigated, improvements to be suggested. Projects with a useful outcome nearly always motivate trainees better than projects which simply require trainees to find out information. Information gained needs to be used. Whilst new trainees are often quite happy merely to find out information, experience shows that they quickly start asking "What do you want me to do with it now I've got it?"
Use all available resources.	Trainees can learn a lot from other workers, and from a range of 'specialists' like shop stewards and safety officers, as well as from more obvious sources.

GUIDELINES	NOTES TO PRODUCERS
	They can also learn a lot from each other - group projects and sessions to discuss each other's findings are particularly useful here. Equally, the opportunity can be taken to encourage trainees to use a range of community resources - suppliers of goods, equipment, and services; directories of information; public services, such as libraries, Government offices, the CAB.
Enrich, where appropriate, those schemes or parts of schemes which seem to offer only limited learning opportunities.	Particularly in schemes where the scope for learning seems to be limited by the nature of the work itself - such as those in process and manufacturing industries - scheme designers find it difficult to offer skills for the world of work and personal effectiveness. But these opportunities exist wherever there are other workers and wherever there is a work system. Often the job of the work based project is to put trainees in contact with the workers and the system in unconventional ways. For example, look for gaps in the trainee's understanding of his/her relationship to other workers, and to larger scale processes in the workplace. At the very least, all trainees should be given the opportunity to find out where their work relates to the work of others, and how it fits in to the overall production process - whether this involves how goods are manufactured, how paperwork is processed, or where supplies come from.
Work-based projects are about learning by doing	
Encourage trainees to find out for themselves and to acquire skills by practising them.	Some things are best learnt by doing rather than by merely being told. This is especially the case for a skills-based programme, like YTS. Trainees are also often better able to find their own level in an individual activity than in group teaching. Projects should be written so that all trainees can do something and those who want to do more are able to do so.

GUIDELINES	NOTES TO PRODUCE
	The criterion of real performance is especially important for those trainees who can do but have no great record of educational attainment. Don't be afraid to put trainees of all levels of academic achievement into real situations. Supposed difference of 'level' are often turned upside down when the emphasis is on skills rather than knowledge alone. Write projects so that every trainee can achieve something worthwhile and some can 'take off' to more appropriate or difficult levels of achievement. The completed project need not be written up. Evidence of performance can easily be an artefact, or be revealed by discussion with the trainee.
Stress the process by which trainees learn as well as the result which they achieve and the knowledge which they acquire.	Deliberately write some problems into the project, rather than always pointing trainees to the easiest route to an 'answer'. Their biggest problems will often arise in tackling new situations. This is why 'the ability to transfer' is stressed in YTS design. To take skills from one place to another trainees will need to be conscious both of having learned them and of how they learned them. Telling trainees how is sometimes the best way of making them competent in the job of the moment; it is practically always the worst way of equipping them for uncertain futures. On the other hand, don't go overboard for open-ended tasks. If there is nothing which is straight-forward, or quickly rewarded, trainees are likely to 'switch off'. Aim for a variety of types of tasks, but don't close off opportunities for learning.

GUIDELINES	NOTES FOR PRODUCERS
	The Action Plan should contain clear instructions, set as problems rather than as solutions. [e.g., 'Decide where you will go to get this information', rather than 'Go to the workshop manual'.] It should aim to guide the trainee through experience and so provide a structure for learning from experience, rather than tell the trainee how to do things. Put real experience before formal learning. Be prepared to take some risks, within obvious limits. Trainees will often learn better for having seen from experience that they need to learn.
Encourage reflection upon experience as a means of learning.	Build in report-back sessions which encourage trainees, tutors and supervisors to review what has been learnt from experience. This helps to encourage the view that assessment is part of the learning process and not something which is inflicted upon trainees at arbitrary moments. Skills and knowledge identified in the review sessions should be recorded in the trainee's logbook/Record of Experience. It is very important to ensure that trainees are referred back to Supervisors or tutors at critical moments [e.g., when decisions are required], to review progress and to discuss the way forward.

IV.2 USING WORK BASED PROJECTS WITH TRAINEES

This section is addressed to supervisors and tutors who will be using work based projects with their trainees on a day-to-day basis. The advice it contains is based on the experience of supervisors and tutors who have used work-based projects and is equally applicable to using the published projects as to using those which are 'home grown'.

Try to match the project to the needs of the trainee and to the circumstances of the individual workplace.

1 Make sure that the project fits the workplace. Projects are not intended to be textbooks or artificial training exercises. They will need to be modified to match the circumstances of particular workplaces and experience shows that this can be done, given a bit of imagination.

2 Make sure that the project matches the learning needs of your trainee. There is nothing more frustrating to a trainee than to be asked to complete a project which is far too easy - or far too difficult. Projects should 'stretch' trainees, but not to breaking point! Discuss suitable projects with trainees, rather than handing them out and telling them to get on with it.

3 Make sure that the project fits the stage of the training programme reached by the trainee. Obviously, for example, projects designed to introduce the trainee to the workplace will not be much use when the trainee has been there three months! 'Big' work based projects, such as large scale investigations, can be used towards the end of the year to allow the trainee to demonstrate competence in a whole range of skills.

Good planning, preparation and introduction are essential to the successful use of work-based projects.

4 Make sure that you know what you have to do by reading through the whole project and the Supervisor's notes. This will also help to check the fit of a published project with the workplace. The 'Summary' will give you an idea of the likely fit, but the 'Action Plan' gives the details.

5 Make sure that the trainee knows what the project is about by asking him/her to read it through completely before beginning work on it.

6 Check that the trainee is clear about what can be learned from doing the project by going over the 'Purposes' section.

7 Make sure that there is enough supervision for the trainee not to run the risk of total failure in difficult parts of the project.

8 Make sure that your colleagues at work know what is happening by letting them know when your trainee starts a project which might involve them.

9 Don't find yourself caught by surprise when your trainee asks for something: check that you have the resources and information you may need, or that you know where to get them.

Prompt, guide, encourage and support the trainee - but don't provide the answers.

10 Take an interest in the trainee's work by making time to discuss progress while the project is being done.

11 Give the trainee time to complete the project. This need not be a regular time set aside each week, but can be time when work is slack, for example.

12 Encourage the trainee to take responsibility for his/her own learning and to solve his/her own problems. Offer support and guidance, but don't act for the trainee.

13 Encourage a trainee who takes a particular interest in one part of a project to develop that interest further. Offer further help yourself, suggest activities that could be done off-the-job, or suggest a follow-up work based project.

14 Check that the trainee has made a note of his/her feelings about a project once it is completed. Ask him/her to complete the 'Trainee Comments' section at the end of the project.

15 Provide feedback to the trainee at the end of the project as well as during the course of it. Let the trainee know how well you felt he/she did and discuss your views with the trainee. Enter details of the project in the logbook/ trainee's record. Five minutes spent reflecting on experience can be worth half an hour's talk beforehand in terms of drawing all of the learning out of a situation.

APPENDIX I/LIST OF EXEMPLAR WBPS

KEY
Ind = Individual
G = Group

OTF No:-	PROJECT NUMBER:-	TYPE:-	TITLE
1	W/1	Ind	How Do I Get There?
	W/2	Ind	Money Payments: Coping with Cheques
	Y/3	Ind	Sales Accounts File
	W/4	Ind	Failing to Turn Up: A Statistical Analysis
	M/5	Ind	ET Phone Home
	M/6	Ind	Clear as MUD
	M/7	Ind	Not Another File!
	M/8	Ind	Who Gets the Job?
	M/9	Ind	What's the Flexitime?
	S/10	Ind	Taking Telephone Calls
	S/11	Ind	Updating and Printing a Mailing List using a Microcomputer system
	Y/12 [also 5 Y/38]	Ind/G	Visitors' Book
	Y/13 [also 6 + 11 Y49/Y84]	Ind	Main Stores - Goods Outwards
	Y/14 [also ALL Y/88]	Ind	The New Employee

OTF NO:-	PROJECT NUMBER:-	TYPE:-	TITLE:-
2	M/15	Ind	A Study of Calvings
	M/16	Ind	Dairy Health
	M/17	Ind	PH Testing
	M/18	Ind	A Fencing Project
	Y/19	Ind	Looking after Lawns and Bedding
	Y/20	Ind	Sheep Stockmanship [Lambing]
	S/21	Ind	Calculating the Profitability of Christmas Turkeys using a Micro-computer system
	S/22	Ind	Recording Milk Yield on a Micro-computer system
	S/23	Ind	Monitoring Horticultural Crop Returns Using a Micro-computer system.
3	M/24	Ind/G	People who live in Glass Houses
4	Y/25 [also 9 Y/63]	Ind	Garage Storekeeping
	Y/26 [also 9 Y/62]	Ind	MOT Test Procedures
	M/27	Ind	The Tools of the Trade
	M/28	Ind	Keeping it Clean
	M/29	Ind	Cost of Repair
	M/30	Ind	Paint
	Y/31	Ind	Valve Recutting

OTF No:-	PROJECT NUMBER:-	TYPE:-	TITLE:-
4	Y/32	Ind	Transport Warehouse Coldstore
	Y/33	Ind	Repairing a fault on a Pipeline
	Y/34	Ind	Battery Recognition and Commissioning
5	S/35	Ind	Electronics Components! Resistors
	S/36	Ind	Electronics Components Symbols
	Y/37	Ind/Small	Multi-Channel Monitoring Device
	Y/38 [also 1 Y/12]	Ind/G	Visitor's Book
	M/39	Ind	If you want to know the time, ask the computer
	M/40	Ind	Monitoring the Waste
	Y/41	Ind	Printed Circuit Board Design and Production
	Y/42	G	Itec Inventory Catalogue
6	M/43	Ind	The Manufacturing Process
	M/44	Ind	Cutting Tools
	M/45	Ind	Moulds
	M/46	Ind	Design
	S/47	Ind	Inspection
	S/48	Ind	Production Line: Materials

OTF NO:-	PROJECT NUMBER:-	TYPE:-	TITLE
6	Y/49 [also 1 and 11 Y/13-Y/83]	Ind	Main Stores - Goods Outwards
7	Y/50	Ind	Working in a Hose Building Factory
8	W/51 [also 10 W/83]	Ind	Fire
	W/52	Ind	Can you see the taste?
	W/53	G	Ready Steady Go!
	W/54	Ind/G	Don't Eat Germs!
	W/55	Ind	Use of Microwave Oven
	W/56	Ind	What a Joint
	W/57	Ind	Mix It!
	W/58	Ind	Preparing the Counter
	W/59	Ind	Ready in an Instant! The use of Convenience Foods
	S/60	Ind	Safety in the Canteen
	S/61	Ind	Top Taste
9	Y/62 [also 4 Y/26]	Ind	MOT Test Procedures
	Y/63 [also 4 Y/25]	Ind	Garage Storekeeping
	W/64	Ind	Marketing - 1 - It's a shoppers world
	W/65	Ind	Marketing - 2 - You can't sell if you don't tell: Preparing and price marking

OTF NO:-	PROJECT NUMBER:-	TYPE:-	TITLE:-
9	W/66	Ind	Marketing - 3 - Setting out the stall: Display and Merchandising
	W/67	Ind	Marketing - 4 - When is a bargain a bargain? Advertising and sales promotion
	W/68	Ind	Marketing - 5 - Putting displays to work
	Y/69	Ind	Checkout Operations
	Y/70	Ind	Protecting Profits and the Control of Shrinkage
	M/71	Ind	Preventing Customer Damage to Packaged Goods
	M/72	Ind	Stocking Up
	M/73	Ind	How Can I Pay?
	S/74	Ind	Goods In
10	S/75	Ind	At the hospital
	S/76	G	Ask the Doctor
	W/77	G	Care of the Feet
	W/78	Ind	Caring for People: Introduction to First Aid
	W/79	Ind	Ready for the Day
	W/80	Ind	How Tall am I?
	W/81	Ind	Can I help you?
	W/82 [also 8 W/51]	Ind	Fire

OTF NO:-	PROJECT NUMBER:-	TYPE:-	TITLE:-
11	Y/83 [also 1 and 6 Y/13 - Y/49]	Ind	Main Stores - Goods Outwards
	Y/84	Ind	Van Delivery and Collection of Goods
	M/85	Ind	Dead Letters
	M/86	Ind	Incoming Parcels
ALL	Y/87 [also 1 Y/14]	Ind	The New Employee
	W/88	Ind/G	Bridging the Gap
	Y/89	Ind/G	Arranging and Conducting a Visit
	Y/90	Ind/G	Helping Hand: Sharing Gained Experience with Another Trainee
	M/91	Ind	Better Safe than Sorry
	M/92	Ind	Safety
	S/93	Ind	Working Day
	S/94	Ind	Cost Estimates
	S/95	Ind/G	People and Work
	S/96	Ind	Signs of Safety
	S/97	Ind	Accidents
	S/98	Ind	Company Newspaper
	S/99	Ind	Workspeak
	S/100	Ind	What's your Problem?